Learning Together:

Interprovincial Cooperation in Education Policy

A Building the New West Project Report

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BUILDING THE NEW WEST

This report is part of the Canada West Foundation's **Building the New West Project**, a multi-year research and public consultation initiative focused on the strategic positioning of western Canada within the global economy.

Five key priorities emerged from an extensive research and consultation process and provide a framework for the Building the New West Project:

- the West must create the tools to attract, retain and build HUMAN CAPITAL;
- the West must continue ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION;
- the West must strengthen its TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE;
- the West must promote the global competitiveness of its MAJOR CITIES; and
- the West must develop new ways of facilitating REGIONAL COORDINATION.

To learn more about the BNW Project, please visit the Canada West Foundation website (www.cwf.ca).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mounting fiscal pressures and a complex public policy environment require Canadian governments to carefully rethink how they pay for and deliver public services. Because greater interprovincial cooperation has the potential to reduce costs and, at the same time, improve the quality of public services, it is a public policy option worthy of serious consideration (Roach 2003). Unfortunately, with the exception of federal-provincial relations, intergovernmental cooperation in Canada is poorly understood.

To help rectify this, and in response to calls for more interprovincial cooperation during a consultation process undertaken in 2001,[1] the Canada West Foundation began a study of interprovincial cooperation among the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Preliminary work revealed that a significant degree of interprovincial cooperation takes place in the area of public education. This finding, coupled with the fact that education is the second largest provincial expenditure item after health care, indicated that interprovincial cooperation in the area of education was fertile ground for additional research.

Public education in Canada faces numerous challenges (e.g., scarce resources and the demand for world-class programs that meet evolving social and economic circumstances) that require creative solutions. Opportunities for greater interprovincial cooperation in the education sector include centres of excellence, information sharing, common curricula, expansion of distance learning, and regional cost-sharing. Hence, it is time to think outside the provincial box and explore the advantages of interprovincial cooperation as they apply to public education. The first step in this process is to determine the nature and extent of existing interprovincial cooperation initiatives in this area. *Learning Together* does this by outlining the results of a preliminary national survey of current examples of education policy cooperation (K-12 and post-secondary). By providing the "lay of the land" in this area, the report sets the stage for more detailed research on improving public education through interprovincial cooperation.

Methodology

Learning Together focuses on cooperation among provincial/territorial *governments* and uses education policy cooperation as a case study of the more general topic of interprovincial cooperation rather than attempt to examine cooperation among the many actors involved in education (e.g., school boards, universities, teacher associations, municipalities, and the federal government).

The inventory of cooperative initiatives was developed by reviewing publicly available information to create a preliminary list of current cooperative arrangements among provincial and territorial governments. (Federal-provincial bilateral agreements are not included.) This research was supplemented by a concerted effort to contact the appropriate government agencies responsible for education, and asking them to review the preliminary list and make additions or deletions. It is important to note that the inventory

1. The Canada West Foundation hosted five consultative events in April and May 2001. The Western Builders Roundtable brought together over 60 community leaders to discuss regional aspirations and policy goals. The event, held in Calgary and chaired by Peter Lougheed (former Premier of Alberta), featured Allan Blakeney (former Premier of Saskatchewan), Gary Filmon (former Premier of Manitoba), Michael Harcourt (former Premier of BC) and Preston Manning (former Leader of the Official Opposition). Four provincial consultations were subsequently held in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Vancouver and Winnipeg. The provincial consultations brought together over 250 community leaders from across the four western provinces. Participants were asked to look ahead to 2020 and think through the requirements for regional prosperity in a turbulent global environment.

of initiatives in this report is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, and may not contain every cooperative arrangement that is currently in place. In addition, the inventory does not include labour market training programs such as apprenticeship and skills upgrading programs; it focuses on K-12 education and colleges/universities.

2. THE BENEFITS OF INTERPROVINCIAL COOPERATION

According to Roach (2003), the theoretical benefits of interprovincial cooperation fall into three interrelated categories: 1) strength in numbers/united response to external threats; 2) economic benefits of interprovincial free trade; and 3) rational public policy. Although there are some economic benefits that could be achieved through more open government procurement and harmonized regulations designed to facilitate the free flow of labour involved in education across provincial borders, most of the advantages of intergovernmental cooperation in the education sector fall under the strength in numbers or the rational public policy categories. In all instances, the basic economic principles of economies of scale and specialization form the rationale for cooperation (Parsons 1993).

Strength in Numbers

In the race to develop human capital and attract top students, faculty, donations, and research dollars, Canada's provincial education systems may have a greater chance of keeping pace with or surpassing foreign competitors by engaging in cooperative initiatives. For example, Canadian universities may be better off working together to create a centre of excellence in cancer research that can draw on the resources and population of the country as a whole rather than dividing their efforts among thirteen separate jurisdictions.

Rational Public Policy

The benefits of cooperating in the area of education are largely associated with the development of more rational public policies. Interprovincial cooperation allows provinces to achieve economies of scale, address spillover effects, and harmonize regulations and programs to create a more efficient policy space. By pooling expertise and resources, governments are able to save money by reducing duplication and serving a larger market. As Parsons argues, many "government services can be produced at lower average costs when they are produced in higher volumes. ... In particular, the per unit cost of supplying some good or service to any one province is clearly much higher than supplying any two or more provinces" (1993, 2).

Economies of scale also allow for a greater degree of specialization. This, in turn, allows governments to reduce costs, improve the quality of programs, and achieve goals that are otherwise impractical or impossible because of a lack of a critical mass of resources or users. For example, both the western provinces and Atlantic provinces have cooperated to create regional veterinary schools rather than create four separate schools in each region. Cooperation can also be used to better manage spillover effects such as the movement of students among the provinces and to harmonize regulations and curricula to better facilitate the movement of labour across provincial borders.

It is important to note, however, that interprovincial cooperation does not negate the value of healthy competition among the

provinces. There are advantages to provincial experimentation and the ability to adapt to local circumstances. Nonetheless, in an environment marked by fiscal scarcity, ongoing demands for better programs, and more intense international competition, the benefits of cooperation should not be ignored and a balance found between provincial, regional, and pan-Canadian approaches.

3. THE EDUCATION POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The Role of the Provinces and Territories

According to the Constitution Act, provinces and territories have jurisdiction over education. Provincial and territorial governments are free to develop their own unique educational structures, institutions, and curricula. "The many differences [between educational systems] reflect regional issues and differing approaches to policy development and practice" (MacIver 1990, 141). Therefore, the most important cog in the education policy wheel is the provincial or territorial department that is responsible for education (see Figure 1). In four provinces – British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland – there are two education departments that individually handle the K-12 and post-secondary education portfolios.

Specifically, provincial/territorial departments of education are responsible for:

> The supervision of elementary and secondary schools; the design and distribution of curriculum materials; structures for school governance and administration; methods of assessment and the standards for student testing; new courses and textbooks; school funding policies and levels; regulations for trustees and education officials of school boards, principals and teachers; research; support services such as libraries and transportation; and, in most provinces, teacher certification. (Dunning 1997, 2)

Figure 1: Departments of Education

Province/Territory	*Education Department*	*Post-Secondary Department* (if separate)
British Columbia	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Advanced Education
Alberta	Alberta Learning	
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Learning	
Manitoba	Department of Education and Youth	Department of Advanced Education and Training
Ontario	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Quebec	Ministère de l'Éducation	
New Brunswick	Department of Education	
Nova Scotia	Department of Education	
Prince Edward Island	Department of Education	
Newfoundland	Department of Education	Dept. of Youth Services & Post-Secondary Education
Nunavut	Department of Education	
Northwest Territories	Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment	
Yukon	Department of Education	

Another important component of the provincial/territorial responsibility for education is the creation of school boards. School boards provide communities with school systems operated by local administrators. School boards handle the

> business aspects that keep the system functioning, including setting the annual budget, establishing policies to be implemented by professional educators, appointing teachers, capital building, and purchase of supplies and equipment. Most boards are authorized to levy taxes or to requisition taxes from municipal governments and to manage grants from the department of education. (Gayfer 1991, 22)

Even though school boards have no authority beyond that which is delegated by the provinces, they are influential players that determine school budgets and the details of how education policy is implemented. They are also the avenue through which the public is most likely to participate in education policy.

Although independent, the different provincial and territorial departments of education meet regularly to discuss common issues. In 1967, the provinces created the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The CMEC is a forum for education ministers to come together to discuss matters of common concern, explore ways to cooperate, share information, and represent Canadian education on an international level. The role and activities of the CMEC will be discussed in the next section.

Role of the Federal Government

Like many policy areas in Canada, there is a certain amount of intergovernmental overlap in education. The federal government does not have general constitutional authority in the area of education, but is constitutionally responsible to protect minority linguistic and religious rights and to administer Aboriginal affairs. As a result, the federal government can be involved in certain aspects of education, as they relate to these areas. The federal government also influences education policy through program development that is aimed at life-long learning, skills training, and employment programs. This means that the federal government can, in some instances, initiate and create national cooperative education policy. The federal government also provides some funding for education.

Funding

Government spending on education (including elementary and secondary education, post-secondary education, and vocational training) was $48 billion in 2001-2002. (This figure does not include "own source" funding such as tuition fees.)[2] The federal government spent $4.7 billion, the provinces and territories $42.9 billion and local governments contributed an additional $172 million. About 62% of this is spent on elementary and secondary education, about 28% on post-secondary education, and the rest on vocational training and "other" education expenditures.[3] Expenditure levels vary between provinces and territories, as does the amount that each province/territory receives from the federal government.

2. It should also be noted that government funding for research is classified according to the purpose of the research rather than as education spending. For example, if a research grant to a university is used for health research, it is included under health expenditures rather than education.

3. Statistics Canada, CANSIM II, tables 385-0002 and 385-0004.

The federal government provides funding to education through direct programs, tax credits, savings programs, transfer payments, and equalization. The majority of this funding is designated for post-secondary institutions or skills training. There is no federal department of education, so funding and projects are organized through various departments. For example, the Department of Finance oversees federal transfer payments to the provinces and territories for post-secondary education. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) is responsible for the Canada Student Loans Program. Canadian Heritage has a program in support of the official languages. Foreign Affairs and International Trade (with the aid of the HRDC) promotes international academic exchanges and monitors international developments in higher education. Industry Canada oversees several post-secondary funding councils.

4. COOPERATION

The charts in this section are designed to provide the reader with an overview of current cooperative efforts in K-12 and post-secondary eduction as well as initiatives of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). K-12 and post-secondary agreements are grouped by region (Atlantic Canada, Ontario/Quebec, Western Canada, and Pan-Canadian). Agreements that involve provinces from more than one region are *repeated* in the appropriate regional categories and are shaded blue.

Kindergarten to Grade 12

There are six interprovincial agreements affecting Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Canada (see Figure 2). Three of the agreements created interprovincial institutions that have gone on to develop further cooperative initiatives. Creating institutions to oversee cooperation is an important characteristic of the K-12 sector and is less common at the post-secondary level. Two of these institutions, the Western Canadian Protocol and the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, are examined in more detail below.

Western Canadian Protocol (WCP)

The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) is a forum for education ministers from the western provinces and northern territories to collaborate on education policy for K-12 students. The western and northern education ministers created the Protocol because they identified six common objectives: common educational goals; need for greater harmonization; high standards in basic education; value of an array of educational opportunities in basic education; removal of obstacles to accessibility for any individual learner; and optimum use of limited educational resources (WCP 2002). After articulating the objectives, the ministers agreed to work collaboratively to accomplish them. Therefore, the Protocol provides the vehicle through which to engage in collaborative activities.

The Protocol outlines the eight areas in which the ministers agreed to work together, namely: curriculum in English; curriculum in French; curriculum in languages other than English and French; distance learning and technology; special education; student assessment and standards of student performance; Aboriginal education; and teacher education and certification. Working groups, led by one province or territory, address curriculum areas and other shared interests/issues in basic (K-12) education for possible collaboration. Priority is given to projects and initiatives that meet the needs of the seven parties. Each party can decide if it wants to participate in a particular project. The working groups are designed to provide a comprehensive role that "is especially vital to complement other mechanisms for collaboration on an interprovincial/territorial basis, such as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada" (WCP 2002).

Figure 2: K-12 Initiatives

Atlantic Canada

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Agreements on the certification of French education professionals	Quebec has entered into cooperative agreements with eight other provinces to facilitate the transfer of French education professionals.	Ongoing (agreements signed between 1991 and 1993)	Quebec and Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland	*Sharing Expertise:* Agreements allow provinces access to specialized expertise.
Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF)	APEF replaced the Maritime Province's Education Foundation, which had operated since 1982. The purpose of APEF is to provide the framework for joint undertakings of the four departments of education in the area of K-12 education in both official languages. The current strategic plan of the Foundation focuses on the ministers' commitment in the areas of common curricula, outcomes, indicators, and assessment.	1995 - Ongoing	Four Atlantic provinces	*Common Interests:* The Atlantic provinces' departments of education are committed to the improvement of the quality of education and believe that regional cooperation can contribute to the realization of this objective. The provinces recognize that shared resources – both human and financial – increase the quality and efficiency of the curriculum development process.
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)	An interprovincial institution established in 1975 by joint agreement among the education ministers of the four Atlantic provinces. The APSEA provides educational services, programs, and opportunities for young people with sensory impairments. The operational costs are shared between the four Atlantic provinces. The 12 member board has three members from each province. "The APSEA Agreement is the only one of its kind in Canada, and as such, may serve as a model for service delivery at a regional level" (APSEA 2002).	1975 - Ongoing	Four Atlantic provinces	*Common Interests/Cost-Sharing*
MOU on Early Intervention between Manitoba and New Brunswick	Exploration of opportunities to cooperate in the area of early intervention in the primary grades within the education system.	2002 - Ongoing	Manitoba and New Brunswick	*Common Interests/Information Exchange*

Ontario/Quebec

Agreements on the certification of French education professionals	Quebec has entered into cooperative agreements with eight other provinces to facilitate the transfer of French education professionals.	Ongoing (agreements signed between 1991 and 1993)	Quebec and Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland	*Sharing Expertise:* Agreements allow provinces access to specialized expertise.

Figure 2 Continued: K-12 Initiatives

Western Canada

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Agreements on the certification of French education professionals	Quebec has entered into cooperative agreements with eight other provinces to facilitate the transfer of French education professionals.	Ongoing (agreements signed between 1991 and 1993)	Quebec and Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland	*Sharing Expertise:* Agreements allow provinces access to specialized expertise.
MOU on Early Intervention between Manitoba and New Brunswick	Exploration of opportunities to cooperate in the area of early intervention in the primary grades within the education system.	2002 - Ongoing	Manitoba and New Brunswick	*Common Interests/Information Exchange*
Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP)	A forum for western and territorial education ministers to collaborate on education policy for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. The Protocol outlines eight areas in which the ministers agree to work together: curriculum in English, curriculum in French, curriculum in languages other than English and French, distance learning and technology, special education, student assessment and standards of student performance, Aboriginal education, and teacher education and certification. Working groups, led by one province or territory, address curriculum areas and other shared interests/issues in basic (K-12) education for possible collaboration.	1993 - Ongoing	All western provinces and territories	*Common Interests/Harmonization:* Having identified common objectives, the ministers agreed to work collaboratively to accomplish them. The Protocol agreement provides the vehicle through which to engage in collaborative activities.

Pan-Canadian

Canadian Education Research Information System (CERIS)	Established by the deputy ministers of education, CERIS is intended to improve Canadian education by linking policy and practice more closely with research and by encouraging research that is relevant to the needs of the education system. Both the Canadian Education Association (CEA) and Industry Canada (SchoolNet) have agreed to participate in the CERIS network.	1996 - Ongoing	All provinces and territories	*Specialization:* The CERIS network aims to make better use of limited resources by maximizing the effectiveness of education research and practice, avoiding duplication of effort, and encouraging communication and collaboration among stakeholders.

Figure 3 lists the completed cooperative agreements that have emerged out of the Protocol. There are eight agreements, of which seven are dedicated to harmonization of curricula. Thus, western and northern students will receive a relatively standard education in the subject areas covered.

Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF)

The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation is the successor of the Maritime Provinces Education Foundation, which had operated since 1982. (The Foundation was expanded to include Newfoundland in 1995.) The purpose of the Foundation is to

Figure 3: Western Canadian Protocol Agreements

Initiative	Description	Completed
The Common Curriculum Framework for Mathematics, K-12	The math framework was the first in a series of joint development projects under the auspices of the WCP. The framework was developed by the western and territorial ministries of education (except Nunavut) in collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders and identifies beliefs about mathematics, general and specific student outcomes, and illustrative examples agreed upon by the six jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction will determine when and how the framework is implemented.	1995; 1996
WCP Special Education Working Group Agreement	The WCP Directors of Special Education agreed to maintain a current catalogue of existing resources produced by the western jurisdictions (on the Saskatchewan Education website) and to develop teacher resource materials in special education that aid the inclusion of all students across grade levels and curricula. Projects include early intervention, and management of difficult social, emotional, and behavioural issues in the classroom. Seven documents have been prepared since 1997: Managing Children with Sexual Problems; Suicide Intervention and Prevention; Crisis Intervention/Responding to Critical Incidents; Teenage Prostitution; Emotional Disturbance; Conflict Resolution/Anger Management; Gang Activities in Schools.	1997
The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts (ELA), K-12	The ELA Framework was developed by the ministries of education in cooperation with teachers and other educators from the provinces. Jurisdictions agreed that a common curriculum would give them assurances that all students would receive a consistent, high quality English Language Arts program. It would also ease the problems with student mobility, as all jurisdictions would be offering a comparable ELA program.	1998
The Common Curriculum Framework for Bilingual Programming in International Languages, K-12	Bilingual programming in international languages refers to partial immersion programs where English and/or a second "international" language (i.e., a language other than French or the languages of Canada's Aboriginal peoples) are the medium of instruction. Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are the only participants.	1999
The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies, K-12	Francophone and Aboriginal representatives were partners with the western provinces and northern territories in the development of a common curriculum framework for social studies. Only Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Territories have agreed to the framework.	1999; 2002
The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, K-12	The framework is intended to be a support document for schools or regions within the western provinces and the territories wishing to develop curricula, learning resources, or strategies dealing with Aboriginal languages. Work began on the framework in 1996.	2000
The Common Curriculum Framework for International Languages, K-12	The framework covers the development of curricula for international language courses (i.e., languages other than English, French or the languages of Canada's Aboriginal peoples). These courses are distinct from bilingual or immersion programming in which the language of instruction is not only the subject but is also used as the medium of instruction for other subjects. Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are the only participants.	2000
Charter for e-Learning Working Group	The newly created e-Learning charter will encourage inter-jurisdictional collaboration in the development, delivery and exchange of distance learning resources and related technology products. Focus will be on shared digital resources and online courses, standards for interoperability of web-based materials and building repositories of learning resources. The charter and the new group replace the original Memorandum of Understanding for Distance Learning and Technology.	2002

Figure 4: Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation

Initiative	Description	Completed
Atlantic Education Performance Indicators *Education Indicators for Atlantic Canada*	The Atlantic provinces collaborated on a project to report education indicators for Atlantic Canada. This report was a Canadian first in providing the public with a comparative overview of how well the provinces' education systems are performing. The Atlantic provinces' departments of education are working collaboratively on a new indicators report. The goal of this new Atlantic indicators project is to provide feedback on the Atlantic provinces' education systems. These indicators will provide an ongoing, systematic source of information to inform stakeholders and assist in educational decision-making.	1996
English Language Arts, Entry - Grade 12 *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*	The Atlantic provinces have completed the development of a new English language arts curriculum for all students in the public school systems across the region. In 1996, the Foundation document was distributed; it provides a framework on which teachers can base decisions concerning learning experiences, instructional techniques and assessment strategies, using curriculum outcomes as a reference point. After the completion and distribution of this document, the provinces collaborated on the development of curriculum guides.	1996
Mathematics, Entry - Grade 12 *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Mathematics Curriculum*	The Atlantic provinces have completed the development of a new mathematics curriculum for all students in the public school systems across the region. In 1996, the Foundation document was distributed; it provides a framework on which teachers can base decisions concerning learning experiences, instructional techniques and assessment strategies, using curriculum outcomes as a reference point. After the completion and distribution of this document, the provinces collaborated on the development of curriculum guides. The guides for entry through grade 11 are complete and available.	1996
Science, Entry - Grade 10 *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Science Curriculum*	The Atlantic provinces have completed the development of a new science curriculum for all students in the public school systems across the region. In 1997, the Foundation document was distributed; it provides a framework on which teachers can base decisions concerning learning experiences, instructional techniques and assessment strategies, using curriculum outcomes as a reference point. The Foundation document was written in collaboration with a pan-Canadian science project. After the completion and distribution of this document, the provinces collaborated on the development of curriculum guides. They are currently in draft form.	1997
Social Studies, Entry - Grade 12 *Atlantic Canada in the Global Community*	The Atlantic provinces contributed curriculum expertise to the development of a textbook to support a new grade 8 (NB)/grade 9 (NF, NS, PEI) social studies curriculum. The textbook, along with supporting teacher resource book, supports the regionally-developed curriculum in which students examine the history, geography, economy, and people of Atlantic Canada.	1997
French Immersion, Grades 1-12 *Teaching and Learning in a Late Immersion Setting - Program of Studies and Guide for FSL Late Immersion Language Arts*	The Atlantic provinces worked collaboratively to produce a program guide for late immersion programs. The guide provides teachers and others in the education community with basic principles to assist in the development of teaching strategies and activities to promote student achievement of the prescribed learning outcomes. In the fall of 2000, *Document d'encadrement du programme de français en immersion au Canada atlantique* was completed and distributed.	1997; 2000
Core French, Grades 1-12 *Core French Program of Studies and Teachers' Guide*	The Atlantic provinces and the province of Saskatchewan collaborated on the development of a program guide and associated experiential teaching resources for core French, grades 1-12. The learning outcomes elaborated at specific grades provide information on program design that will meet the individual needs of each province. The provinces collaborated on the development of numerous learning modules, developed an instructional video to aid teachers in implementing the strategies and collaborated on writing general and key-stage curriculum outcomes for core French programs.	1999
Curriculum Implementation Review - English Language Arts	The curriculum implementation review project is designed to gather survey information about the views of teachers and principals regarding the English language arts curriculum. English language arts is the first regionally-developed curriculum to be introduced across the four Atlantic provinces. Principals and teachers received, completed, and returned the surveys in the fall of 2000.	2000
Arts Education, Entry - Grade 12. *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*	The Atlantic provinces collaborated on the development of an arts education foundation document that provides an outline of the nature of arts education, delineates outcome statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at key stages, outlines principles of assessment and evaluation, and provides a description of the learning environment that fosters students' learning in arts education. The document provides a framework for future development of arts education programs in the Atlantic provinces.	2001

Figure 4 continued: Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation

Initiative	Description	Completed
Technology Education, Entry- Grade 12. *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Technology Education Curriculum*	The Atlantic provinces collaborated on the development of a technology education foundation document that provides an outline of the nature of technology education, delineates outcome statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at key stages, outlines principles of assessment and evaluation, and provides a description of the learning environment that fosters students' learning in technology education. The document provides a framework for future development of technology education programs in the Atlantic provinces.	2001
Assessment Projects	The Atlantic provinces are working collaboratively on the development of assessments to measure the attainment of curriculum outcomes for students and to provide information for program evaluation. The assessments are being developed for use in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and English language arts at the end of grade 12. The administration and use of the assessment instruments are a provincial responsibility.	Ongoing*
Science, Grades 11-12 Physics, Chemistry, Biology	The Atlantic provinces have collaborated on the development of new science programs in physics, chemistry and biology for all students in the public school system across the region. The curriculum guide will elaborate on the outcomes for each course, provide information on program design, and give examples of instructional practices.	Ongoing*

*Completion date unclear at time of writing

provide the framework for joint undertakings of the four Atlantic provincial education departments in the area of K-12 education in both official languages. The current strategic plan of the Foundation focuses on the ministers' commitment in the areas of common curricula and outcomes, indicators, and assessment. A three-year operational plan was approved in 1999 that focuses on continued cooperation in the development of curricula, assessment resources, enhanced commitment to early literacy, and the provision of French-first language instruction in a minority setting (APEF 2002).

Despite its recent creation in 1995, the APEF has an extensive list of cooperative initiatives (12 in total - see Figure 4). This apparent success is likely due to two inter-related reasons: 1) the pre-existing Foundation provided the necessary groundwork for future cooperative initiatives; and 2) the Maritime provinces, and now the Atlantic provinces as well, have developed cooperative institutions not seen anywhere else in Canada. The Council of Maritime Premiers (CMP) and the Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) are organizations dedicated to regional cooperation with a lengthy history of *practical* outcomes. It is also important to note that, like the WCP, the focus of the APEF has largely been on the harmonization of curricula.

Post-Secondary

Post-secondary education cooperation is a slightly different, and more complex, matter than K-12 education cooperation. This is due largely to the fact that universities and colleges are semi-autonomous institutions with relatively little government influence over their actions. A brief explanation of the exact power and position of post-secondary institutions is in order.

Post-secondary institutions in Canada are given the authority to grant academic credentials by their respective provincial or territorial governments, either through a university charter, or by an act of a provincial or territorial legislature. Universities in Canada are relatively autonomous; they set their own admission standards and degree requirements, and have considerable flexibility in the management of their financial affairs and program offerings (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials - CICIC 2002). Nonetheless, "it is widely recognized that university undergraduate programs are remarkably uniform

Figure 5: Post-Secondary Initiatives

Atlantic Canada

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Atlantic Veterinary College	The Atlantic provinces (with the initial financial aid of the federal government) collaborated in the building of the Atlantic Veterinary College in PEI. Market research indicated that a vet school was needed somewhere east of Quebec. Due to the small population base in each of the four Atlantic provinces, and the expense of operating a professional school, collaboration was seen as a viable alternative.	1986 - Ongoing	Four Atlantic provinces	*Critical Mass/Strength in Numbers:* Provinces cooperated because of a small population base and high operating and capital costs. The agreement allows provinces to achieve critical mass and realize the benefits of economies of scale.
Maritime Forest Ranger School	The Maritime Forest Ranger School in New Brunswick was established in April 1946 as a cooperative effort of the provincial governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and the wood-using industries of the two provinces. The Ranger School's objective is to produce competent forest technicians for service with private, industrial, and government forestry or natural resource organizations.	1946 - Ongoing	New Brunswick and Nova Scotia	*Critical Mass:* Allows both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to achieve critical mass.
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC)	The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission is a unique institution in Canada. It serves the cause of higher education in three provinces as an agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers. Established in 1974, the 19 members of the MPHEC are drawn from the three Maritime provinces, and represent higher education institutions, governments, and the general public. Duties include: cooperative arrangements, establishing centres of excellence, and making arrangements outside of the region to provide programs. The MPHEC meets four times a year and is funded by the provinces.	1974 - Ongoing	Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island	*Economies of Scale/Specialization:* The Commission's legislated purpose is "to assist the Provinces and the institutions in attaining a more efficient and effective utilization and allocation of resources in the field of higher education in the region." Its creation allows the region to engage in specialization, benefit from economies of scale and create centres of excellence.
Quebec-New Brunswick Agreement	Under an agreement with New Brunswick, the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation reserves a certain number of places for New Brunswick students in technical programs not offered in French in New Brunswick.	Ongoing*	Quebec and New Brunswick	*Sharing Expertise:* The agreement allows New Brunswick to meet its ongoing need for French trained professionals in a cost-effective manner.
Tripartite Optometry Agreements between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI	Partnership between Ontario, the University of Waterloo and the other participating provinces to allow a certain number of students into the optometry program. Participating provinces reimburse Ontario.	Ongoing*	Agreements are negotiated between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI.	*Economies of Scale*

*Start date unclear from available information

Figure 5 continued: Post-Secondary Initiatives

Ontario/Quebec

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Ontario-Quebec Agreement	Ontario-Quebec Agreement for the Admission of Ontario Residents to Selected Programs Offered in French at Quebec Universities	Ongoing*	Ontario and Quebec	*Sharing Expertise:* The agreement allows Ontario to meet its need for French trained professionals in a cost-effective manner.
Ontario-Quebec Health Study Program (Ontario-Quebec Agreement for the Admission of Ontario Residents to Selected Programs Offered in French at Quebec Universities)	The Ontario-Quebec Health Study Program is designed to increase the number of French-speaking professionals available to provide health services in French in Ontario. Each year, in accordance with the Ontario-Quebec Agreement, the two participating universities in Quebec – Université Laval and Université de Montréal – reserve a certain number of positions in specified limited-enrollment programs for participants in the Ontario-Quebec Health Study Program. Candidates who are accepted must agree to return to Ontario upon completion of their studies to practice their profession for a minimum of two years in a region of the province that is designated for services in French. Ontario makes annual payments to Quebec for each position filled by a resident of Ontario.	Ongoing*	Ontario and Quebec	*Sharing Expertise:* The agreement allows Ontario to meet its need for French trained professionals in a cost-effective manner.
Quebec-New Brunswick Agreement	Under an agreement with New Brunswick, the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation reserves a certain number of places for New Brunswick students in technical programs not offered in French in New Brunswick.	Ongoing*	Quebec and New Brunswick	*Sharing Expertise:* The agreement allows New Brunswick to meet its need for French trained professionals in a cost-effective manner.
Tripartite Optometry Agreements between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI	Partnership between Ontario, the University of Waterloo and the other participating provinces to allow a certain number of students into the optometry program. Participating provinces reimburse Ontario.	Ongoing*	Agreements are negotiated between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI.	*Economies of Scale*

*Start date unclear from available information

Figure 5 continued: Post-Secondary Initiatives

Western Canada

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Alberta-BC Orthotics and Prosthetics Cost Sharing Agreement; BC-Saskatchewan Orthotics and Prosthetics Cost Sharing Agreement	BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan jointly fund the Prosthetics and Orthotics Diploma Program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).	1986 - Ongoing (Current agreement is in effect until June 2004)	Individual agreements are negotiated between BC, BCIT and Alberta, and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
Alberta-Manitoba-Saskatchewan Interprovincial Agreement Nuclear Medicine Technology Program at SAIT in Calgary	Partnership between Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan to allow a specific number of out-of-province students into the Alberta-based program. Manitoba and Saskatchewan reimburse Alberta.	Ongoing (AB-MB since 1993; AB-SK since 2001)	Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
Alberta-Saskatchewan Lakeland College Memorandum of Agreement	Lakeland College (Alberta) serves the residents of the Lakeland Region of Northwestern Saskatchewan as well as Northeastern Alberta, in exchange for financial contributions by Saskatchewan. Agreement continues until terminated by either party.	Ongoing (Signed 1982 and again in 1999)	Alberta and Saskatchewan	*Spillover Effects:* Lakeland College has a campus in Lloydminster on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. Agreement helps mitigate spillover effects.
Alberta-Saskatchewan Occupational Therapy Cost Sharing Agreement at U of A in Edmonton	Alberta, through the University of Alberta, agrees to admit 15 full-time first year students annually. Saskatchewan pays costs incurred in expanding the program to accommodate their students. Saskatchewan students are admitted over and above the Alberta quotas.	Ongoing (most current agreement signed in 2001)	Alberta and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
Alberta-Saskatchewan-Manitoba Training in Denturist Technology Cost Sharing Agreement (Dental Mechanics at NAIT in Edmonton)	Partnerships between Manitoba and Saskatchewan with Alberta to allow a specific number of Manitoba and Saskatchewan students into the program. Manitoba and Saskatchewan reimburse Alberta.	Ongoing*	Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) Agreement	Provides Saskatchewan residents with access to international credential assessment services provided by IQAS. Under the terms of this contract, Saskatchewan funds the base costs for the delivery of this service and individuals pay assessment costs directly to IQAS.	1995 - Ongoing (renewed every three-year period)	Alberta and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale:* Based on the low level of immigration to Saskatchewan, it was deemed more cost-effective for Saskatchewan to contract with a respected and established agency such as IQAS, rather than establish a Saskatchewan-based international credentials assessment centre.
Nuclear Medicine at SAIT in Calgary	Partnership between Saskatchewan and Alberta to allow a specific number of Saskatchewan students into the program. Saskatchewan reimburses Alberta.	2001 - 2006	Alberta and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*

*Start date unclear from available information

Figure 5 continued: Post-Secondary Initiatives

Western Canada

Initiative	Description	Timeline	Participants	Rationale
Occupational Therapy at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg	Partnership between Manitoba and Saskatchewan to allow a specific number of Saskatchewan students into the program. Saskatchewan reimburses Manitoba.	Ongoing*	Manitoba and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
Respiratory Therapy at SAIT in Calgary	Partnership between Alberta and Saskatchewan to allow a specific number of Saskatchewan students into the program. Saskatchewan reimburses Alberta.	Ongoing*	Alberta and Saskatchewan	*Economies of Scale*
Tripartite Optometry Agreements between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI	Partnership between Ontario, the University of Waterloo and the other participating provinces to allow a certain number of students into the optometry program. Participating provinces reimburse Ontario.	Ongoing*	Agreements are negotiated between Ontario, the University of Waterloo, and BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and PEI.	*Economies of Scale*
Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon	The Western College of Veterinary Medicine was established in 1964 after consultation between the federal government, BC, Alberta, Manitoba and the University of Saskatchewan to be the only college of veterinary medicine to serve western Canada. Spaces in the undergraduate program are allocated on a quota system.	1964 - Ongoing	BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the University of Saskatchewan	*Critical Mass:* The agreement enables each province to respond to provincial labour market needs for veterinarians in a cost-effective manner. This agreement creates a regional "centre of excellence."

*Start date unclear from available information

Pan-Canadian

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)	CICIC collects, organizes and distributes information, and acts as a national clearinghouse and referral service to support the recognition and portability of Canadian and international educational and occupational qualifications. In 1990, after Canada ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region, CICIC was established to assist Canada in carrying out its obligations under the terms of this convention. The Convention promotes international mobility by advocating wider recognition of higher education and professional qualifications.	1990 - Ongoing	All provinces, territories, and the federal government	*Specialization:* Established jointly by the federal and provincial governments as a national non-profit body to serve as a centralized referral and information service.

in quality across the country. And while universities across Canada do not constitute a system, per se, there is considerable cooperation between and among Canadian universities through a variety of administrative and academic networks" (CICIC 2002).

Despite their quasi-independent status, post-secondary institutions are still subject to provincial and territorial control. Figure 5 demonstrates how involved provinces and territories are in negotiating cooperative agreements between other jurisdictions in order to provide post-secondary education to their own residents.

Cooperative agreements at the post-secondary level are different in nature from K-12 agreements because they tend to focus on one province requesting access to a program offered by another. In almost every case, an agreement is negotiated because one province does not have the critical mass (either in terms of population or revenues) to set up its own program. As a result, there are more bilateral post-secondary agreements than at the K-12 level. Of the 18 agreements listed, 10 of them involve only two provinces and all of these are between neighbouring jurisdictions.

Another major theme that emerges from the post-secondary agreements is the creation of regional programs. This is illustrated by the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM), the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC), and the Maritime Rangers School. (The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission is an example of a regional institution created along the same lines as the WCP and the APEF.) The creation of interprovincial programs is easier at the post-secondary level than at the K-12 level due to the relative ease of post-secondary student mobility. Student mobility provides a rationale for provinces and territories to *specialize* and deliver some post-secondary services on a regional rather than a provincial basis. This reduces costs through economies of scale, while the development of "centres of excellence" yields higher quality services.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

The provincial Ministers of Education created the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) after years of federal government encroachment into the provincial domain of education (Bergen 1977, 9-10). In 1972, four years after its creation, the CMEC released a statement that explains its purpose:

> The Council is an interprovincial educational agency set up for coordination, information and liaison purposes, operating at the interprovincial, provincial-federal and international levels, under the direction of the departments of education. Its basic aim is to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, and to provide a means for the fullest cooperation among provincial governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education. Each provincial department of education continues to be autonomous within the Council; no recommendations or decisions of the Council are binding on provincial ministries with respect to their jurisdictions. (Bergen 1977, 11)

The CMEC initiates activities relating to both K-12 and post-secondary education (see Figure 6). Its mandate in the K-12 sector is to coordinate the exchange of information among jurisdictions, and to undertake specific projects as directed by the ministers responsible for education. As such, specific projects in the K-12 sector vary from year to year. Currently the CMEC is addressing

Figure 6: CMEC Initiatives

Initiative	Description	Completed
School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP)	The School Achievement Indicators Program is a cyclical program of pan-Canadian assessments of student achievement in mathematics, reading and writing, and science that has been conducted by the CMEC since 1993. The provinces and territories, through the CMEC, have developed the SAIP to assess the performance of students in mathematics content and mathematics problem-solving, reading and writing, and science.	1993
Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program (PCEIP)	The Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program is an ongoing initiative of the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC), a partnership between Statistics Canada and CMEC, to provide a set of statistical measures on education systems in Canada. The PCEIP indicator set is intended to reflect both the scope of education systems in Canada and the concepts of lifelong learning and accountability. The set contains 33 indicators organized in three broad themes: Context; Features and Characteristics of the Systems; and Outputs and Outcomes. Reports are published and can be used by policy-makers, practitioners, and the general public to develop an understanding of the performance of education systems in Canada.	1995
Pan-Canadian Protocol for Collaboration on School Curriculum	CMEC ministers announced their intention to undertake joint initiatives in the area of curriculum in 1993 and by 1995 they had adopted the Protocol. Three areas have been identified for collaborative action so far: information technology, science, and French. The Protocol establishes a process of joint initiatives that are broad in nature, covering not only curriculum development, but also assessment, program evaluation, learning resources, and technology, for both face-to-face and distance delivery. All provinces participate except Quebec.	1995
Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits	CMEC ministers agreed at their September 1994 meeting to have Canadian degree-granting institutions implement measures for the recognition of credit transfer for the first two years of undergraduate study by September 1995. Degree-granting institutions have been encouraged to endorse the Protocol.	1995
Canadian Education Research Information System (CERIS)	Established by the deputy ministers of education, CERIS is intended to improve Canadian education by linking policy and practice more closely with research and by encouraging research that is relevant to the needs of the education systems. Both the Canadian Education Association (CEA) and Industry Canada (SchoolNet) have agreed to participate. CERIS aims to make better use of limited resources by maximizing the effectiveness of education research and practice, avoiding duplication of effort, and encouraging communication and collaboration among stakeholders.	1996
The Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC)	Comprised of the Chief Statistician of Canada and the deputy ministers of education, this committee manages the partnership between CMEC and Statistics Canada.	1996
CMEC Collaborative Research Initiatives	CMEC sponsors research activities through the Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda (PCERA), the Programme for International School Assessment (PISA), and the Government Education Research Network (GERN). (This is in addition to the PCEIP, SAIP and CERIS mentioned above.)	PCERA (1997) PISA (2000) GERN (2001)
Pan-Canadian Science Project	This project emerged out of the above Pan-Canadian Protocol for Collaboration of School Curriculum. Currently the provinces have developed a Common Framework of Science Learning Outcomes for K-12.	1997
Pan-Canadian French as a First Language Project (PCFFLP)	This project emerged out of the above Pan-Canadian Protocol for Collaboration of School Curriculum. Jurisdictions are collaborating on a contextual analysis of the SAIP results of minority francophone students. Immediate concrete actions are being carried out in the Pan-Canadian French as a First Language Project to address the challenge of francisation. (Francisation is a component of linguistic planning, which itself is a set of measures and means designed to enhance the value and promote the use of a language in different contexts.) The overall project includes two distinct but related segments, scheduled for completion by spring 2003. This undertaking marks the first time jurisdictions from across the country have collaborated on a joint development project in this area. All provinces and territories except the Yukon and Quebec are participating in the project, recognizing that shared expertise and resources, both human and financial, can increase the quality and efficiency of the project's processes.	2002-03

issues of: teacher and student mobility; curriculum; information technologies in learning and teaching; copyright; and French language education in minority settings (CMEC 2002). In terms of post-secondary education, the CMEC published *A Report on Public Expectations of Post-Secondary Education in Canada* in 1999 that outlines six broad themes (quality, accessibility, mobility and portability, relevance and responsiveness, research and scholarship, and accountability). The document will serve as a guideline for future work in this area.

According to the CMEC, its initiatives are divided into two categories: pan-Canadian strategy activities, in which all jurisdictions participate, and consortium activities, which provinces and territories choose to participate in and fund, according to their interests. Thus, the CMEC provides a destination for ministers and deputy ministers of education to meet and discuss issues of mutual concern, while also providing a flexible forum for collaborative projects. Its activities are coordinated by a permanent secretariat.

Figure 6 shows initiatives and activities coordinated by the CMEC. Unless otherwise stated, all provinces and territories are involved in each of the agreements.

Unlike the trends identified in the sections on K-12 education and post-secondary education, the CMEC's initiatives are largely related to research and statistical collection. In fact, the CMEC coordinates a significant number of indicator programs and research networks. These are activities that can be conducted by the Secretariat and permanent staff, rather than by the ministers of education from each province. With approximately 40 staff, including administrative support, the CMEC can overcome nation-wide provincial cooperation inertia by performing certain activities itself. As is the case with the Western Canadian Protocol and the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, having an established institution greatly enhances the chance of successful interprovincial cooperation agreements.

5. REGIONAL TRENDS

The West - Western Canada participates in two main regional initiatives: the Western Canadian Protocol and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, as well as a number of post-secondary agreements. However, a large percentage of existing agreements are bilateral in nature. Alberta and Saskatchewan have a considerable number of bilateral agreements at the post-secondary level, as well as one at the K-12 level. This is somewhat unique compared to the rest of the country. Ontario and Quebec come close to rivaling this level of bilateral cooperation but lack the simultaneous commitment to regional agreements we see in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In the West, agreements are largely characterized by one province requiring services of another, larger province. Saskatchewan cannot afford to provide health education programs because of small demand and so turns to Alberta, whereas Alberta may turn to BC for a different specialized service. And the region as a whole turns to Ontario for what it cannot provide (e.g., the agreement between the western provinces and Ontario for Ontario to offer spaces in the optometry program at the University of Waterloo). Thus, while K-12 agreements arise out of a desire for common curricula, post-secondary agreements arise out of need – a trend that we see in varying degrees across the entire country.

Ontario - Ontario's large population and tax base mean that it can often achieve economies of scale without turning to interprovincial cooperation. As a result, Ontario is not a role model of interprovincial cooperation. Nonetheless, it participates in the CMEC and has a couple of post-secondary agreements with Quebec and the West. The bilateral agreements with Quebec are largely driven by a need to provide schooling in French for post-secondary students because Ontario does not have the critical mass to warrant specific programs in French (e.g., the Ontario-Quebec Health Study Program).

Quebec - The province of Quebec participates in numerous cooperative agreements, but mainly on an international scale, not an interprovincial one. Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation avidly supports cooperation agreements and lists the main forms as: information exchange, expertise transfer, joint research, scholarships for Quebec students, agreements on tuition fees and participation in the activities in major international organizations. While Quebec does participate in agreements with other Canadian jurisdictions, namely related to French programming, the majority of its activities are with countries like France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Mexico.

Atlantic Canada - Atlantic Canada actively participates in interprovincial cooperation. Agreements on curriculum, programming, information sharing, creating post-secondary institutions, and creating authoritative bodies are abundant. This is a region with a long history of cooperation, especially in the education sector. Examples include the APEF, the Atlantic Veterinary College, the Maritime Provinces' Higher Education Commission, the Council of Maritime Premiers, the Council of Atlantic Premiers and all the agreements resulting from the respective organizations. One major difference between Atlantic Canada and the West is that there are very few bilateral agreements as almost all agreements occur on a regional basis.

6. OPPORTUNITIES

As we have seen from the previous charts and analysis, a number of trends are evident in interprovincial cooperation in the education sector. These trends provide the avenue for identifying promising opportunities for future agreements.

History of Cooperation - The majority of current interprovincial agreements in education have been negotiated in the last 10 years. This demonstrates that there has either been an increase in the desire to cooperate or an increase in the need for jurisdictions to combine resources. This increase is coupled with a solid history of cooperative agreements that dates back to the 1960s. Therefore, there is an opportunity to expand on the existing framework, and an increasingly positive climate to initiate additional interprovincial cooperative agreements.

Institutions - The number of agreements that are organized by the Western Canadian Protocol, the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation and the Council of Education Ministers, Canada indicates that institutions facilitate the development of cooperative agreements. An opportunity exists here for provinces to create more collaborative institutions. For example, the western provinces and northern territories could create a body dedicated to the advancement of post-secondary education. Such an institution could be modeled after the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, and would provide the foundation for cooperative agreements, for reducing waste associated with duplication, and for creating regional centres of excellence.

Harmonization - At the K-12 level, the majority of agreements are related to the harmonization of curriculum policy. This may mean that curriculum policy is the easiest area in which to cooperate. An alternate possibility is that harmonization of curriculum policy is a high priority and therefore is being done first. In either case, there is an opportunity for further growth in this area. Curriculum harmonization could expand beyond its largely regional focus to one of pan-Canadian scope. Such expansion might be best orchestrated by the CMEC.

Critical Mass/Specialization - The act of four provinces coming together to collaborate on the creation of a regional school is an impressive feat. The Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the Atlantic Veterinary College represent case studies for jurisdictions in how to obtain critical mass and benefit from specialization. They also raise the question of why cooperation in this area has been limited to veterinary services. Hence, policy researchers should examine the general factors that would facilitate more cooperation at this level. A real opportunity exists to create collaborative schools across a range of disciplines through specialization, whether by region or by subject. For example, the West could create its own optometry school (rather than relying on Ontario to provide optometry schooling). In this way, each region of Canada could be a "one-stop shop" for all forms of post-secondary education training.

National Forum - The CMEC was created in 1967, yet the number of agreements it has generated does not reflect its long history. Reasons for this are unknown; however, it is possible to speculate that interprovincial cooperation is more difficult on a nation-wide basis than on a regional one. Thirteen jurisdictions equal 13 potentially different sets of priorities. However, on a number of issues, the provinces have surprisingly similar goals. Therefore, the CMEC has an opportunity to guide the provinces toward greater cooperation. The fact that the CMEC is an established institution only adds to its potential for success.

Federal Government - Although the role of the federal government is not a theme explored in much detail in *Learning Together*, there is still a lot of opportunity and potential for federal government involvement in interprovincial cooperation. In particular, the federal government can be a conduit of interprovincial cooperation in education by providing financial support and guidance. For example, a key catalyst behind the successful creation of both regional veterinarian schools was the federal government. In the case of the Atlantic Veterinary College, the federal government provided 50% of the initial capital costs. This financial support allowed the provinces to build the school, while also retaining their long-term independence over the facility. The federal government can also *facilitate* more interprovincial cooperation among the provinces. For example, the federal Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) can work with the Atlantic provinces and their respective organizations (e.g., CMP, CAP, MPHEC, APEF) on cooperative initiatives.

Successful interprovincial cooperation in education is not dependent on the involvement of the federal government, nor is it hindered by that involvement. In fact, there may be real potential for greater participation by the federal government, provided it does not infringe upon the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories.

Regions - The final opportunity for interprovincial cooperation in education can be divided into a series of regional opportunities.

The West - The western provinces are in a position where they can continue to look within their own region for cooperative partners and expand on the existing regional base of interprovincial cooperation. In terms of K-12 education, the western provinces can continue to support the efforts of the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP). In terms of post-secondary, the western provinces could build upon their experience in negotiating bilateral agreements to focus more on working as a region. This ties into the previous suggestion that the western provinces could create a body to oversee post-secondary collaboration, which would in turn facilitate the creation of further regional schools.

Ontario - With its size and wealth, Ontario could shed its introspective approach to education and instead provide specialized programming that other province's need. Ontario has the opportunity to create "centres of excellence" with the rest of the country in mind. For example, there are probably numerous post-secondary programs in which Ontario could designate a certain amount of enrollment slots to other regions on a cost-recovery basis. This would allow the Ontario government to receive funding from other jurisdictions for educating their students, while reducing waste associated with unnecessary duplication.

Quebec - Quebec has considerable experience with cooperation on an international level – experience that it could apply nationally to facilitate further agreements with other provinces and regions. Language differences do not have to be a barrier, and should in fact be the raison d'etre for increased collaboration between Quebec and the rest of Canada in that Quebec could easily expand upon its current role of providing French language program support.

Atlantic Canada - In the immediate future, Atlantic Canada will likely continue to be at the forefront of cooperative activities in Canada. The opportunity and the challenge for this region will be to further *apply* its experience. The Atlantic provinces can do this in three ways: by creating more agreements within their own region; by expanding their cooperative activities westward; and by providing expertise to other regions wishing to model cooperative activities after those of Atlantic Canada.

7. BARRIERS

Despite the numerous opportunities listed above, and an array of other possibilities, barriers to successful interprovincial cooperation in education stem from two different, but interrelated, sources: barriers to interprovincial cooperation in general and barriers specific to education policy.

Interprovincial Cooperation Barriers - Cooperation among relatively autonomous political jurisdictions may not occur for a number of reasons including inertia, lack of political will, provincial individualism, and perceived short and long-term costs. Sometimes large groups do not accomplish desired tasks due to a lack of willingness for motion or because they lack a leading force. If this is coupled with a lack of political will, then collaboration will not happen. For instance, "Ontario has had the greatest influence on education policy-making in Canada since before Confederation" (MacIver 1990, 142). But as we have seen from the data on interprovincial cooperation, Ontario is not currently an active participant. A cooperation initiative can only be successful

if it motivates policy-makers to act. This task will be complicated by a province's tendency toward individualism. No matter the ties that bind this country together, the reality of the Canadian political landscape is that provinces have their own interests and agendas, and the constitutional authority to pursue them. This does not preclude cooperation, but it is a reality that must be combated when attempting to bring about interprovincial cooperation.

Finally, there is a perceived, and real, cost involved with cooperating with one's neighbour. However, it can be argued that the gains outweigh the costs. For example, the Atlantic provinces were nervous about the prospect of building a regional veterinary school, yet now each province pays a fraction of the costs that they would have to had they created schools of comparable quality in each province.

Education Policy Barriers - Education policy barriers can be summarized as falling under two main areas of concern: special interest groups and implementation obstacles. Special interest groups are numerous and vocal in education policy-making. Leithwood, Cousins and Trider identify the groups that are likely to be involved in educational reform as: "colleges, universities, business and industry, teacher federations, the secondary school principals' associations and subject-matter groups" (1990, 308). In addition, groups with more specialized interests (e.g., separate school supporters, affirmative action groups, multicultural groups) may also participate. "While the particular special interest groups will vary depending on the policy to be developed, it is likely that some such groups will choose to participate" (1990, 308).

In order to bring about changes in education policy, "implementers may need to overcome a variety of obstacles, such as lack of policy-related knowledge or skill, disincentives to change, inconsistent organizational arrangements, or inadequate resources" (Leithwood, Cousins and Trider 1990, 309). In fact, the implementation stage can suffer from problems related to the policy itself, the organizational structure, political context, and personal and professional factors.

8. CONCLUSION

Provincial and territorial governments are engaging in a considerable amount of interprovincial cooperation in education. Provinces have harmonized curricula, shared information and resources, developed regional programs, and engaged in pan-Canadian strategies to enhance the nation's education system. The reasons for undertaking these activities are largely related to creating more rational public policy. By combining their efforts, provinces can achieve economies of scale by creating the critical mass necessary to provide programs that would otherwise be unattainable. This pursuit of rational public policy has resulted in several themes and trends that can be seen across education levels and across the regions.

In the area of K-12 education, interprovincial cooperation tends to revolve around curriculum harmonization. Authoritative bodies in the West and Atlantic Canada were created just for that purpose. In fact, having an established institution greatly enhances the chance of successful interprovincial cooperation (e.g., Western Canadian Protocol, Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada). However, in the area of post-secondary education there is an obvious lack of such institutions. Instead, interprovincial cooperation is characterized by bilateral agreements between neighbouring jurisdictions. These agreements are often the direct result of one province being unable to provide a service for its citizens, leading it to enter into an agreement with another province that can.

Interprovincial cooperation agreements exist in every part of the country, but tend to be more prevalent among smaller provinces. Due to a greater need, the provinces of Atlantic Canada and the West are more active participants in cooperation than either Ontario or Quebec.

Significant opportunities exist for provinces to combine forces and engage in further collaborative activities, from creating regional schools or developing centres of excellence to expanding on existing institutions. Provinces can work bilaterally, within regions, or nationally. While the opportunities are significant, there are a number of barriers that may prevent, or stall, future interprovincial cooperation agreements. These barriers may, however, be overcome through a combination of increased information about successful cooperation and concerted efforts to transcend silo-thinking.

Further research into interprovincial cooperation in education could determine why the number of cooperative agreements is increasing; why certain regions are more active than others; why different trends have emerged out of K-12 and post-secondary education; and most importantly, how provinces can address barriers and take advantage of the benefits of interprovincial cooperation.

Interprovincial cooperation need not be a fuzzy concept relegated to conversations about "getting along"; it is a viable policy goal with *real* results. Given its track record, the education sector has the chance to be at the forefront of increased interprovincial cooperative activity in Canada.

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Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC): www.cicic.ca

Council of Education Ministers, Canada (CMEC): www.cmec.ca

Council of Maritime Premiers/Council of Atlantic Premiers (CMP/CAP): www.cmp.ca

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC): www.mphec.ca

Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WCP): www.wcp.ca

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